

University College London
Faculty of the Built Environment
Bartlett School of Planning

*A consideration of the success of the Idea Stores in
improving library and learning services in the
London Borough of Tower Hamlets*

Christopher Marsh BSc (Hons)

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Acronyms

CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
CAE	Centre for Accessible Environments
DCMS	Department for Culture Media and Sport

Abstract

Public libraries throughout the country have been experiencing serious issues with a decline of visitor numbers and book issues. Tower Hamlets, a borough in East London was experiencing similar trends and with the contribution of initiatives and policies from Central Government the Idea Stores concept was born.

These innovative and modern new learning centres were designed to replace the old, outdated library services the borough had previously had and were built to be community focal points, providing not just books as is the traditional stereotype of libraries but offering computer and internet facilities, educational classes for all ages, cafes, crèches and relaxing atmospheres for all members of society. They were built to stand out from surrounding buildings with new designs catching the eye of passers by.

There are currently four Idea Stores that have been completed and running for several years with a further three to be built and open in the near future. It is the four that have been opened that this research project will investigate. It will also look at the issues facing the country's library facilities and investigate the ways the Idea Stores have sought to change the public perception of libraries as old, formal and in some cases intimidating facilities to welcoming, relaxed and enjoyable institutions.

The conclusions are that overall the Idea Stores have been successful in attracting visitors to use the facilities and the take up of services such as educational classes and internet terminals has been very high. The only concerns were that the overall rebranding of the Idea Store name rather than the term library has led to confusion about what the facility is for and a cessation of advertising after the first two Idea Stores opened has also posed a problem.

Chapter 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background

Libraries are public spaces open to all, housing large amounts of knowledge and information and providing opportunities for learning and improvement of skills. “Libraries have a central role to play in ensuring everyone has access to the resources, information and knowledge they need – particularly those groups in society who will otherwise be disadvantaged, including people who are less affluent and people with literacy problems”, (DCMS, 2003: 6).

These public facilities offer huge benefits in improving people’s lives and regenerating areas and encouraging investment. “Because of this position as a trusted local resource, libraries have the potential to contribute to local and national priorities for social inclusion, education, e-government, regeneration and culture”, (Audit Commission, 2002: 2).

The last few years have seen debates about the purpose of libraries in the twenty first century. The last decade has been hard for libraries with book issues and visitor numbers falling and questions being asked about whether or not libraries have a place in a world where the information they provide can be found at the click of a button via the internet. All 4,700 public libraries across the UK are judged by figures of book loans and number of visitors and members. “This has prompted warnings...that, on current trends, libraries would collapse in 20 years”, (Ezard, 2005a).

The report *Who’s in Charge? Responsibility for the Public Library System* written by Tim Coates argued that by the turn of the century the national library service was failing, with declines in usage and rising costs. “In the past seven years of decline...funding of the library service by local councils has risen by 25%...If we do not address the fundamental structural problems of the library service, there may be no libraries...in ten or fifteen years’ time”, (Coates, 2004: 1).

Despite criticism the arguments that Coates made were correct. Dramatic changes in the way people used and viewed libraries had to be made and government initiatives were developed. New strategies and policies were instigated and documents such as *Framework for the Future* and the Audit Commission's *Building Better Library Services* were released by government departments to guide local authorities on changes that were necessary to keep these fundamental public facilities alive.

In 2003 the Arts Minister, Tessa Blackstone revealed plans for a new government strategy to improve library services. Led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) the document *Framework for the Future* was published giving details on a ten year plan to improve libraries and encourage people to use their local libraries more. Consulting with different groups involved in the education department and library services was undertaken to ensure that *Framework for the Future* had clear aims and targets to ensure that all public libraries would be able to achieve the goals. One radical idea was to give libraries a new image, offering alternative sources of information and providing new services other than books. This has been highly influential in the redevelopment of libraries in Tower Hamlets with the development of a new kind of library facility – The Idea Store.

The Idea Store concept was first proposed in 1998 by Tower Hamlets Borough Council in conjunction with several organizations to replace “five of its 12 libraries and open seven new "Idea Stores" in their place at a cost of £25m”, (*Benjamin, 2001*). The hope was that the Idea Stores would “capture the best traditions of the library movement and the education sector but presents them in an exciting way, one that draws in new users and retains existing users”, (*Tower Hamlets Borough Council, 2002*).

Working with local educational facilities and with an emphasis on “lifelong learning” it was hoped that the Idea Stores would provide opportunities for Tower Hamlets’ residents to develop their skills and improve their knowledge. However traditionalists and opponents of the Idea Stores have made claims that they will not be successful in their aims and that they “are not a cost-cutting exercise. Although it will lose five libraries...it

will have to find an additional £1m a year to fund more staff and longer opening hours”, (Benjamin, 2001).

After one of the largest community consultations of its kind in the country in 1998 and with investigations into the existing facilities it was found that all of the libraries shared many problems and had to overcome issues to encourage people back, (*Chrisp Street Idea Store Manager, 2008*). With continued community involvement in proceeding years and alongside many government policies and initiatives a new strategy for the library services in Tower Hamlets was created. It was decided that to make a real impact and to boost the number of library users the new library facilities would have to be innovative and bold, (*Chrisp Street Idea Store Manager, 2008*). In a sense this has perhaps made the four individual Idea Stores a kind of small scale flagship project like Peckham Library.

At the end of the 1990’s Peckham Library was built and became a model library facility with the Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell in 2004 encouraging councils to base future libraries on it. Peckham Library has been very successful – “the quantity of books and other materials loaned in its first year was four times that of the two libraries it closed, and the number of visits has tripled”, (Benjamin, 2001). This is down to the design of the library which is now an iconic structure and flagship development. “The library was designed to be striking, to make people curious about what lies inside, and to challenge the traditional view of libraries as staid and serious environments”, (*Southwark Council, 2005*).

Prior to the implementation of the Idea Stores proposal Tower Hamlets’ libraries were experiencing falling visitor numbers and rundown facilities. There were a total of “seven full time libraries which were open five days a week, five part time libraries, a mobile library and an “outreach” library service for housebound people”, (*Tower Hamlets Council, 2002: 3*).

The Idea Stores concept is that the new learning facilities will be rebranded and redesigned to give a new, modern and unique image of public libraries into “street corner

universities” but still offering the traditional learning classes and services. It is hoped that individuals will be empowered to help themselves with guaranteed support offered at all opportunities, (*Principle Idea Store Manager, 2008*). Overall it is hoped that the Idea Stores will “double the number of visits to libraries and the number of people engaged in lifelong learning...including increases in the standards of literacy and numeracy in the community”, (*Tower Hamlets Borough Council, 2002: 7*).

The Borough of Tower Hamlets is situated in East London. It is one of the most deprived boroughs in the capital scoring 44.64 on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007 and making it the third most deprived local authority in England with high levels of unemployment, low levels of educational achievement and inadequate employment skills, (*Tower Hamlets Borough Council, 2002: 1*). Educational levels have risen over the last decade at both primary and secondary school level but are still below the national average.

The population is increasing each year as “international migration provides the greatest overall change in Tower Hamlets’ population” (*Praxis, 2007: 3*) especially with people who are under nineteen years old who make up 28% of the population. The three largest age brackets are 20-25, 26-30 and 31-35 so overall the majority of the population is made up of younger and middle aged people. However it has been found that these new immigrants have an “educational attainment [which is]...is relatively limited: 15% with no qualifications and 55% with only graduation from high school”, (*Praxis, 2007: ii*). “The main reason for developing new forms of library provision...is because of rapidly changing demographics and patterns of population growth and settlement”, (*CABE, 2004: 6*). With Tower Hamlets’ population increasing rapidly with trends likely to continue it was important to update these failing libraries.

My first experience of the Idea Stores came after visiting Poplar, a run down area of Tower Hamlets which lies under the glittery skyscrapers of Canary Wharf. Nestled amongst the old 1950s and 60s architecture was located a modern building standing in sharp contrast to the concrete structures around it – not the stereotypical view of a library

with the grandeur of neo-classical design. There were not just books on offer but meeting places, social areas and internet facilities dominating the ground floor. Upstairs the books were stored alongside rooms which I later learnt were for classes and learning services. This was the Chrisp Street Idea Store and after having looked what effects on regeneration the rebranding of a public building such as a library, if you can call the Idea Stores libraries at all, could have.

The first Idea Store was opened at Bow in 2002 followed by one in Chrisp Street in 2004, a flagship store opened in Whitechapel in 2005 and a fourth opened in 2006 in Canary Wharf. There are currently plans to open another in Bethnal Green in 2010 with more to follow to replace the current failing library facilities.

1.2 Objectives

This research project will be taking the form of an evaluative report looking at things from an inductive approach. Below is a list of objectives which will be used to assess the achievement of the existing Idea Stores to determine their success.

- 1) How successful have the Idea Stores been in increasing visitor numbers and book issues therefore reversing the trend of decreasing numbers as seen in the old libraries?
- 2) Are visitors using the new additional services and facilities such as cafes, lifelong learning classes and internet terminals?
- 3) To what extent have the changes in designs, location, and rebranding from the original libraries to the Idea Stores been beneficial in attracting more visitors?

Chapter 2.0 Methodology

This section will discuss the ways data and research was obtained and the evaluation techniques adopted to answer the questions made in the introduction. It will discuss the structure and distribution methods of the survey given out to the public, the reasons behind the questions asked and the aims of the interviews carried out.

2.1 Aims

The aim is to assess what the visitors to the Idea Stores think about the new Tower Hamlets library facilities and if the new approaches for attracting visitors like redesign, relocation and providing new facilities have been beneficial.

2.2 Methods of Evaluation

It was decided that an inductive approach would be most suitable in assessing the success of the Idea Stores. A two pronged approach was undertaken involving carrying out a survey to gather information from people visiting the Idea Stores and through interviews with managers of the Idea Stores. It was felt that the public are the customers and it is their opinion that matters the most hence the surveys which gained valuable primary research and people's views on the services provided to them also ensuring results were not biased.

The survey was designed to retrieve both quantitative and qualitative results to gain a clearer picture about how the Idea Stores are used and perceived. The questions are written and structured in a way considered most beneficial in getting results according to the Oppenheim rules (shown in appendix 1). The results were analysed and compared to secondary sources obtained from findings made in the literature review.

The managers interviewed were the manager of Bow Idea Store and Chrisp Street Idea Store and the principle Idea Store manager.

The inductive approach “provides an easily used and systematic set of procedures for analyzing qualitative data that can produce reliable and valid findings”, (*Thomas, 2006*). It will also “allow research findings to emerge from the frequent, dominant or significant themes inherent in raw data”, (*Thomas, 2003*). Due to the mainly qualitative questions asked in the survey this approach was thought to be most useful at analyzing and displaying data and the cause and effect basis helped form a conclusion.

2.3 Survey Design

One hundred and sixty people completed the survey outside the entrances to the four Idea Stores (forty outside each). This number was appropriate because it is a large enough sample but did not make analysing unwieldy. After carrying out a pilot survey to assess the suitability of the questions each survey took one to three minutes to complete and due to time restrictions it was estimated that forty people would provide enough information over the limited time period. There were ten qualitative and quantitative questions designed to flow from one to the next using easy to understand vocabulary. A copy of the survey can be found in appendix 2.

The surveys took place outside the entrances to the four Idea Stores over two similar – Saturdays, 12th July and Saturday 19th July 2008 (two Idea Stores on each) because this was thought to be when participants would be most representative of the local population (most people have the day off work/school).

2.4 The Survey and Interview Purpose

The first part of the survey established the gender and age bracket of the participant to prove it was carried out randomly and to measure which age groups are using which facilities.

To answer the first and second questions of this research project questions one to four of the survey established what facilities are used most and the differences between the Idea Stores and the libraries they replaced. The interviews sought to gain more detail about the

policies in encouraging people into the Idea Stores and statistical evidence for successes or failures in book issues and visitor numbers.

Because part of the strategy for improving the Tower Hamlets' libraries is to improve the location, design, accessibility and overall rebranding, questions five to nine of the survey aimed at establishing how successful this approach has been. The interviews again sought to obtain more information on the background behind the Idea Store name, the reasons for the designs chosen and the benefits of the locations if any.

Libraries are understood by the public so it seems sensible to continue with this title. By changing the name as with the Idea Stores questions arise over whether the public will understand what these new facilities are. The interviews obtained information on ways around this issue and the promotion of the Idea Stores.

The final question gave the participant the opportunity to voice any opinions about the Idea Stores and gave a broader perspective on how successful the Idea Stores are. If many people feel that there is not much more that can be done then it would seem that the strategies and goals implemented in 1998 are being achieved.

2.5 Limitations

The main issue encountered was getting people to participate as many claimed not to have enough time. This is why the surveys were carried out on Saturdays when there were a larger number of people visiting the Idea Stores and therefore more chance to complete all forty surveys. This problem was considered which is why only the most important questions were asked to keep the time needed to complete it to a minimum.

One issue about carrying out the surveys on a Saturday is that those who participated are more representative of weekend visitors rather than weekday visitors who may be visiting for different reasons. Especially with the Canary Wharf Idea Store which maybe used by business people during the week and local people at weekends. However, as mentioned

before due to time restrictions it was necessary to ask as many people in the shortest amount of time possible.

The main issue with the interviews was that information provided by the managers may have been biased indicating that the Idea Stores have been nothing but successful. This is why it was important to obtain statistical evidence rather than just opinions of the managers. The only other difficulty was arranging a time to meet because the managers ran very busy schedules however this was overcome and the managers were very cooperative.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Permission was asked and given from the principle Idea Stores manager to carry out the public surveys. The managers of the facilities were also informed on the days that the questionnaires were completed. It was important to respect the visitors of the Idea Stores and everyone approached. When asking if someone would participate it was made clear that only a few minutes would be needed, that it was voluntary and all information would be treated confidentiality. The purpose of the questionnaire and research project was then explained.

The managers interviewed were ensured that any information they wanted kept private would be and the interviews were arranged on their time. The managers' permission was also asked and granted when taking photos.

Chapter 3.0 Literature Review

This section will provide secondary research and background information to the problems that British Libraries are facing and the policies and ideas being put forward to counter these issues. It will look at the problems facing Tower Hamlets' libraries and the reasons for the implementation of the Idea Stores.

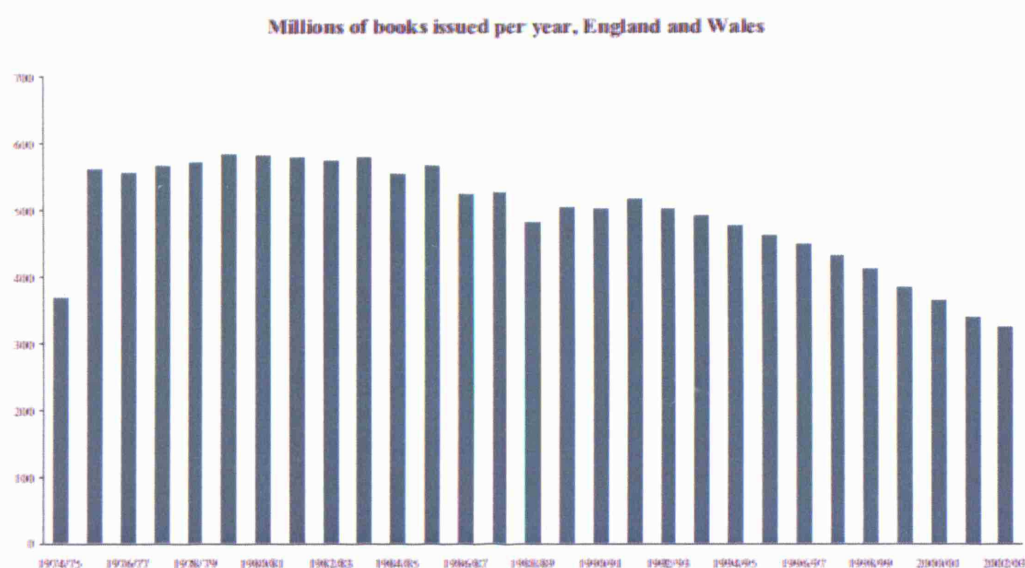
3.1 Issues Affecting the Nation's Libraries

Since their establishment in the 1850's public libraries have been viewed places to go for people to improve their knowledge and skills and since then have played important roles in improving the lives of communities. Although libraries were originally designed as institutes for educational improvement they were also seen as centers for the working classes to recreate, promoting good social values and improving communities, (*Snape, 1995*).

However over the last few decades questions have arisen over what contributions to society libraries are giving. It has been acknowledged that "many libraries are no longer simply about lending books and providing a neutral and quiet space for reading and research. Libraries now serve their communities in a number of ways becoming a focal point for community life", (*House of Commons, 2005: 16*). However their very existence is in question as visitor numbers and book issues have decreased over the last decades.

With this decline a response from the government for dramatic changes in not just what libraries had to offer but in the way that the public view these facilities was needed, (*Bow Idea Store Manager, 2008*). In 2002 research carried out by the Audit Commission found that "since 1992/93 visits have fallen by 17 per cent, and loans by almost one-quarter whilst twenty-three per cent fewer people are using libraries for borrowing than just three years ago", (*Audit Commission, 2002: 1*).

Figure 1:



(House of Commons DCMS, 2005)

As shown in figure 1 since the 1980's there has been a steady decline in the number of books being issued at public libraries. Because lending books is a library's sole purpose if fewer people are borrowing those books then the point of having that library seems unbeneficial. This graph shows that British libraries face a massive problem and their whole purpose is under threat.

There have been different reasons identified for why libraries are facing such problems. The location of libraries was often awkward and research showed people would not go out of their way to make a journey just to visit one. "People cannot or do not want to make special visits to libraries even if the library is close at hand", (*Tower Hamlets Borough Council, 2002: 5*). The physical appearance and interior design of libraries also causes problems with many of the "older libraries, in particular, [being] intimidating for some people to use – with 'official looking' facades, imposing issue desks, formal layouts and uncomfortable furniture", (*Audit Commission, 2002: 6*). This has led to high maintenance costs and inadequate accessibility for the elderly and disabled.

These two important points have been highlighted because "over one-half of library services use buildings that are poorly located or in poor condition", (*Audit Commission,*

2002: 1). Changing this image was seen as a pathway towards boosting visitor numbers and having the potential to benefit local regeneration, (*Bow Idea Store Manager, 2008*). There is evidence to suggest that making even simple changes to internal displays such as “improving internal signage, using attractive ‘bookshop’ style displays, shelving reference, lending and audio/visual items together in themed sections, or introducing lounge areas or coffee shops”, (*Audit Commission, : 6*) can give facilities a refreshing image that will attract visitors and improve services.

Book stocks and quality of reading material offered has contributed to falling issues whilst book retailers compete with libraries for customers due to their “extended opening hours, improved layouts, [increase in] the ranges of books and services they offer, and adopted more aggressive pricing policies”, (*Audit Commission, 2002: 3*). Books have also come into direct competition with sources such as the internet which have become more easily accessible.

Figure 2:

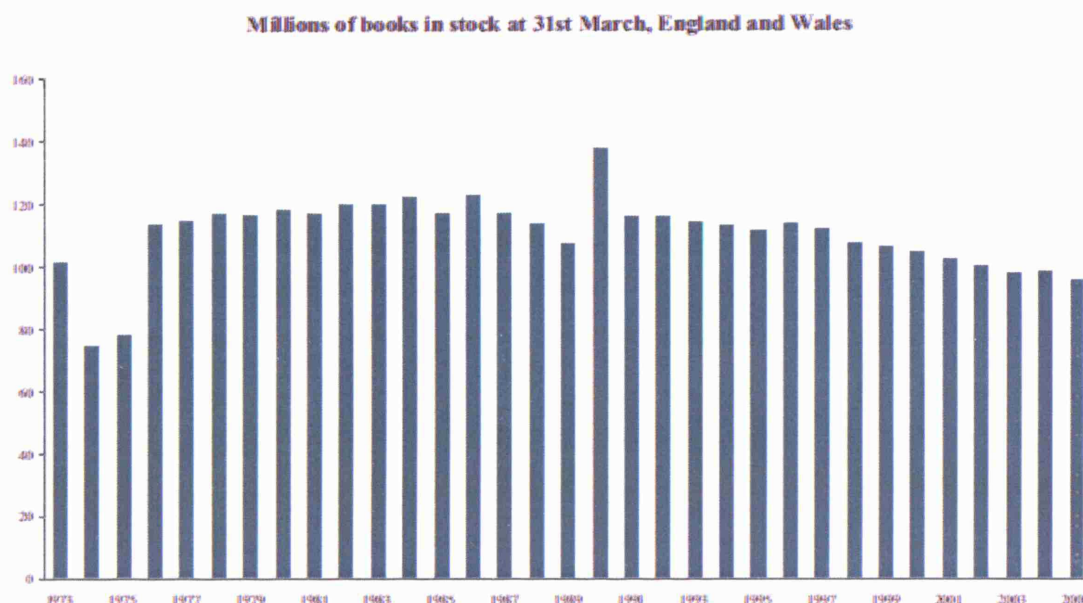


Figure 2 shows a decline in the number of books in stock throughout the country’s libraries (*House of Commons DCMS, 2005*).

3.2 The Role and Renewal of Public Libraries and the Idea Stores

Before the Idea Stores were developed the libraries in Tower Hamlets were used by under roughly 21% of the population and were seeing trends of decrease in visitor numbers similar to the nation's public libraries, (*Chrisp Street Idea Store Manager, 2008*) despite the fact that 98% of people asked in the community consultation felt library services are vital facilities for local communities, (*Tower Hamlets Borough Council, 2002: 4*).

With so many communities in the country including Tower Hamlets facing issues of unemployment and poor educational attainment the government initiated a number of policies involving local libraries as key players in delivering community renewal. The report *Building Better Library Services* gives best value indicators for new public libraries to adhere to when being developed. They cover a number of objectives, highlighted during stakeholder consultations ranging from making books more available to longer opening hours and more welcoming buildings. Other research stated that “libraries help governments promote their wider health, educational and social objectives”, (*Ezard, 2005b*) and this should be encouraged.

3.3 Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning schemes are a strategy the government hopes will provide local communities with opportunities to gain qualifications and learn new skills at all ages. This kind of informal education and learning plays a significant role in helping to improve local communities. “The self motivated learning which libraries promote is central to the creation of a lifelong learning culture in which people expect and want to learn throughout their lifetime”, (*DCMS, 2003: 8*). By improving education and educational facilities individuals (from children to adults) will have access and opportunities to develop their skills and qualifications.

The introduction of internet terminals has proved to be successful in recent years - “The tide has turned [from the decline in the number of visitors using libraries], this will be credited largely to the internet terminals now in almost every library”, (*Ezard, 2005c*). Uniting computer facilities and libraries offers benefits as libraries are “uniquely well

placed to foster the spread of vital new IT skills among the population by providing ready access to IT facilities”, (*Tower Hamlets Borough Council, 2002: 11*).

Prior to the Idea Stores adult education in Tower Hamlets had developed in an “ad hoc way...with many outreach sites dependent on agreements with primary and secondary schools...[they were] often restricted by the operational needs of the schools and they can lack flexibility”, (*Tower Hamlets Borough Council, 2002: 13*). The Idea Stores offered a chance to change this. Life long learning is a major part of the Idea Stores’ services and following the community consultation which showed a demand for computer and internet terminals there is evidence that “both services are converging, brought together by technology. Equally, the services share many common aims and have common users”, (*Tower Hamlets Council, 2002: 3*).

The government has emphasised that to deliver successful community renewal local education services should work together to help communities efficiently “in order to spread the costs of capital investment and maintaining the programme...for example the new Idea Store in Bow, East London – a joint venture undertaken with further education services: their principal ethos is that of lifelong learning” (*CABE, 2003: 6*). This brings together all forms of local services from libraries to schools, social exclusion units to adult education classes. This was further emphasised in *Framework for the Future’s* aims on building “an aligned and cohesive MLA Partnership that operates effectively in a culture of partnership”, (*MLA, 2006: 2*).

3.4 Community Focal Points

Public libraries are good centres for different services to work around. More libraries are building “upon existing relationships with surrounding schools to continue to provide study support and homework clubs for schoolchildren”, (*Tower Hamlets Borough Council, 2002: 32*). Encouraging reading groups such as Sure Start, designed to encourage young children to read and offering opportunities for young offenders and children in care are new priorities the government would like to see initiated.

The Idea Stores have expanded their network of partnerships to include local schools and colleges and adult education facilities and have helped improve council services. “Health advice will be on offer in a relaxed and informal setting and voluntary sector groups will have access to prime space to give advice to local people”, *Tower Hamlets Borough Council, 2002: 6*). Libraries can act as “centres of advice on council services; sources of support for small businesses; venues for community meetings and the location of a range of other services not traditionally seen as part of a library's core remit”, (*House of Commons: 2005*). This means libraries are good institutions to tackle social exclusion and an emphasis on this has been recommended by government departments by providing opportunities for people of all ages. With such a mixture of ethnic groups in Tower Hamlets the Idea Stores act as a good centre to reach out to minority groups.

3.5 Redesign

Library renewal is another key strategy of the government. The physical appearance of libraries has an impact on local communities and there has been a prominence on redeveloping libraries internally and externally to make them inviting to visitors. Many of the original libraries in Tower Hamlets were old Victorian buildings which were costing large sums of money to maintain and provided inadequate access for disabled users, (*Bow Idea Store Manager, 2008*). The age of the libraries in Tower Hamlets meant many had become dated and unwelcoming environments - very important factors in attracting visitors with “basic maintenance, health and safety works and disabled access [costing] £4.4M by 2004”, (*Tower Hamlets Borough Council, 2002: 3*).

Libraries potentially can be a kind of small scale flagship project bringing new identity to an area with the possibility for further investment. “The physical presence of a development can be seen as sufficient in itself. In essence the flagship is acting as a large advertising hording for the area, the implied message being that this is the place for others to spend or to invest”, (*Smyth, 1994: 21*).

Flagship developments are usually bold and iconic which draw attention to themselves and surrounding areas. Rebranding the image of public libraries is one of the

government's aims of ridding the old fashioned, stereotypical visions that have been identified as a reason for the decline in visitor numbers. New and innovative designs are now seen as very important at attracting visitors both externally and internally and bringing regeneration to surrounding areas. "Location, design and access for people with disabilities are key to making libraries and lifelong learning a success. This means parting with some of our existing and often much-loved buildings", (*Tower Hamlet Borough Council, 2002: 5*).

Public libraries are modernizing by adding "comfort services not traditionally associated with libraries...such as cafés, toilets, and even lounge areas with armchairs for browsing and relaxing", (*CABE, 2004: 8*). Accessibility is another major issue as many older libraries lack facilities for the elderly or disabled. "Core service functions such as the provision of toilets, catering facilities, entrances and exits, need to be designed to be accessible to all users", (*CABE, 2003: 7*).

However the issue over redeveloping public libraries has caused tensions between traditionalists who feel libraries should be kept as they are - grand Victorian establishments, with books being central to their role and modernists who believe the library facilities' only chance of revival is through modernization of buildings and services. This battle has been fought in Tower Hamlets with "traditionalists...pitted against modernising councillors and local authority staff who argue that closing older, under-used libraries and relocating to new, hi-tech buildings in shopping centres will attract people who fail to use the service", (*Benjamin, 2001*).

Because of traditionalist views of books remaining at the core of library services, this has been highlighted in *Framework for the Future* and in the Idea Stores Strategy. The public consultation identified a need to increase book stocks and quality and this has been a major priority in getting people back to libraries and maintaining books at the heart of public libraries. This could help form a balance between traditionalists and modernists because although libraries are undergoing dramatic transformations the libraries' main purpose of providing books is protected.

3.6 Location

Building in central locations was a key point made in the Idea Stores community consultation preferably near shops already popular destinations for the public - “[The Idea Stores should be] at the heart of our neighbourhood shopping centres, near or besides supermarkets wherever possible”, (*Tower Hamlets Borough Council, 2002: 2*). The old libraries were located in awkward places so local people had to make a direct trip to the library rather than being able to carry out other activities such as shopping or a school run on the same journey. “Most were situated well away from other amenities, and fewer and fewer people could be bothered to make the effort to visit them”, (*Crace, 2004*).

The community consultation showed “people wanted a quality library service but they would use it even more if they could combine a visit to the library with a visit to the shops”, (*Tower Hamlet Borough Council, 2002: 3*). The four completed Idea Stores have achieved this being built next to supermarkets and in the case of Canary Wharf being built in the middle of a busy shopping centre. The plans for the seven Idea Stores was that they would “be in prominent, convenient positions...Each Store, would bring great benefits to their shopping centre, breathing new life into local retail”, (*Tower Hamlets Borough Council, 2002: 6*).

Chapter 4.0 Results Analysis and Discussion

This section will look at what the results from the surveys show and information obtained from the interviews and discuss the reasons behind these findings.

4.1 Increasing Book Issues

Although altering the perception of libraries has changed it is important books remain at the heart of these facilities keeping their traditional role. When the Idea Stores first opened book stocks and the quality of the reading material were improved as a result of the community consultation, (*Bow Idea Store Manager, 2008*). Government grants were given to Tower Hamlets Borough Council to improve book quality and for programmes such as *Sure Start* to encourage young children to read, (*Chrisp Street Idea Store Manager, 2008*).

Comments were made in the survey from those who used to visit the old libraries that the book stock had improved whereas before it was difficult to get items as they were often issued out. Some stated that improvements in library services and designs had influenced their decision to use services more. Those who came into study accentuated this by saying that the book quality is at a good level to obtain information.

The results show that issuing out books is still the main reason why people visit the Idea Stores (as shown by figure 9) with similar numbers of books being issued across all age groups showing that books are still important for both younger and older people. Only a small number came to read books on site but this is not surprising as the main purpose of the Idea Stores is to borrow books and take them away.

But despite the positive feedback from the surveys information obtained the manager for Bow Idea Stores shows that book issues have steadily been falling in the Bow and Chrisp Street Stores but rising in Whitechapel and Canary Wharf.

Figure 3: Idea Store Book Issue Numbers 2005-2006

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Bow	140,647	117,329	114,673
Chrisp Street	180,591	162,195	155,685
Whitechapel	199,360	267,937	271,378
Canary Wharf	3301	90,742	102,146

(Bow Idea Store Manager, 2008)

The sharp decrease in book issues (shown in figure 3) for Bow Idea Store between 2006 and 2007 coincides with the closure of the Safeway supermarket next door. Locating next to busy supermarkets and shopping areas was an essential part of the Idea Stores development plan and is something discussed later in this chapter. This shows the importance of developing libraries in busy public areas such as shopping centres. Negotiations are currently underway with local bodies to reopen the supermarket in an attempt to boost visitor numbers but no conclusion has been reached, *(Bow Idea Store Manager, 2008)*.

4.2 Increasing Visitor Numbers

The new facilities and community services provided in the Idea Stores have made them important community focal points and have helped boost visitor numbers with increases higher than the libraries which the Idea Stores replaced. Research carried out before the development of the Idea Stores showed that less than 20% of the population of Tower Hamlets used the libraries available – this is currently around 26%, however this only covers active members who have issued out one book or more in the past year, *(Principle Idea Store Manager, 2008)*.

The survey showed that most people issue out books but some do not use this service and therefore the overall percentage of people using the Idea Stores is higher. This is a problem as people visit the Idea Stores for different reasons and it is difficult to determine which facilities are being used more than others, *(Bow Idea Store Manager, 2008)*.

Figure 4: Idea Store Visitor Numbers 2004-2008

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08
Bow	359,917	343,539	311,189	315,691
Chrisp Street	309,157	432,145	446,925	461,714
Whitechapel	163,005	374,446	675,007	649,203
Canary Wharf		7,323	234,852	334,986

(Bow Idea Store Manager, 2008).

Figure 4 illustrates that Bow showed a sharp decrease in visitor numbers between 2006 and 2007 around the time the Safeway supermarket closed supporting the need to build new libraries in busy shopping locations. However the results for Bow show that between 2007 and 2008 there was a slight increase in numbers giving some indication that trends maybe turning but this has only been a slight increase and is too early to conclude that this will continue. Visitor numbers taken for the next few years will give a better understanding about this.

In the years running up to the opening of the Bow Idea Store in 2002 the Council funded large amounts of marketing including leaflets delivered to every household in the local area, road shows providing information about the Idea Stores and advertising on buses and trains. When Bow Idea Store opened, in its first year visitor numbers tripled compared to the two libraries it replaced, *(Principle Idea Store Manager, 2008)*. In the run up to the Chrisp Street Idea Store opening in 2004 marketing was reduced, however leaflets were still distributed. The success of the Bow Street Idea Store was still in people's minds so the services provided at the new Chrisp Street Idea Store would be well known. After Chrisp Street Idea Store opened marketing ceased, *(Principle Idea Store Manager, 2008)*. Both results for the book issues and visitor numbers are relatively high in the opening years of these first two Idea Stores in comparison to the opening years of Whitechapel and Canary Wharf which opened later.

The large difference in visitor numbers between the opening year of Chrisp Street and Whitechapel Idea Stores would have been affected by the complete cessation of marketing and advertising after the opening at Chrisp Street. It was felt that the success of

the first two Stores would have been enough to allow for a reliance on word of mouth between local users and non-users, (*Principle Idea Store Manager, 2008*). But the small number of users and book issues in the opening years of the Whitechapel and Canary Wharf Idea Stores in comparison to the opening years of Bow and Chrisp Street identify a dramatic decrease and show reliance on word of mouth is inadequate. Although these numbers increased dramatically in the proceeding years the Idea Stores are designed to have a real impact on an area and that means having a massive level of success immediately.

Concern is that with increased number of foreign immigrants moving into Tower Hamlets, speaking so many different languages, word of mouth will be a difficult form of communication to rely on. Comments made during the survey back this up – several people stated that it took them a long time to identify what the Idea Stores were. In months after the Idea Stores opened or after the participant had moved into the area some thought that the new facilities were just shops and had no knowledge about what services were provided. It is important to ensure that as many people understand what the Idea Stores are. With evidence from the survey and numbers from figures 3 and 4 continued marketing is essential to allow new residents to understand and use the facilities.

4.3 Comparison to the Original Library Facilities

The Idea Stores have replaced many original and failing libraries that existed in Tower Hamlets with another three set to replace existing facilities in the next few years. There were seventy participants who used the facilities before the Idea Stores. Figure 5 and 6 show the majority of participants used the original libraries and Idea Stores less often than once or twice per month except for Whitechapel which sees most people visiting once or twice a month. Whitechapel is the flagship Idea Store and attracts the most visitors which explains the difference.

Figure 5: How often the Idea Stores are used

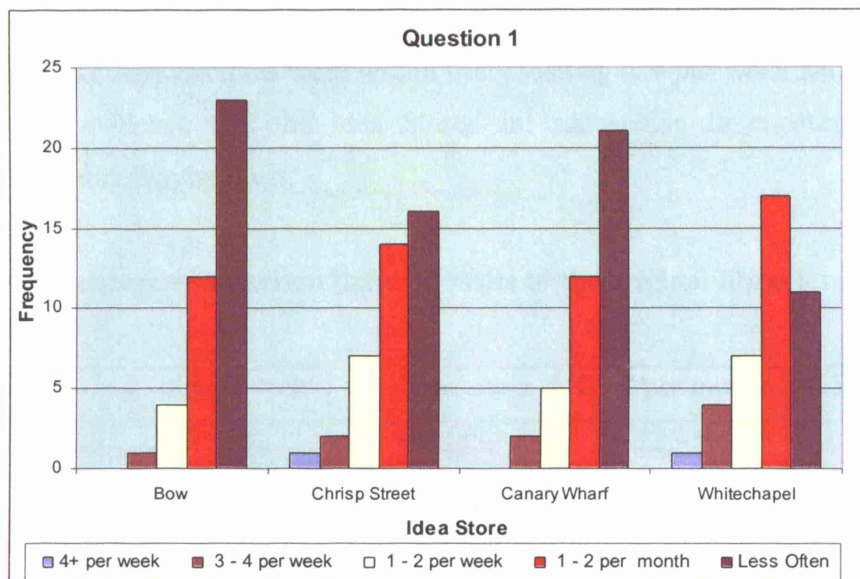
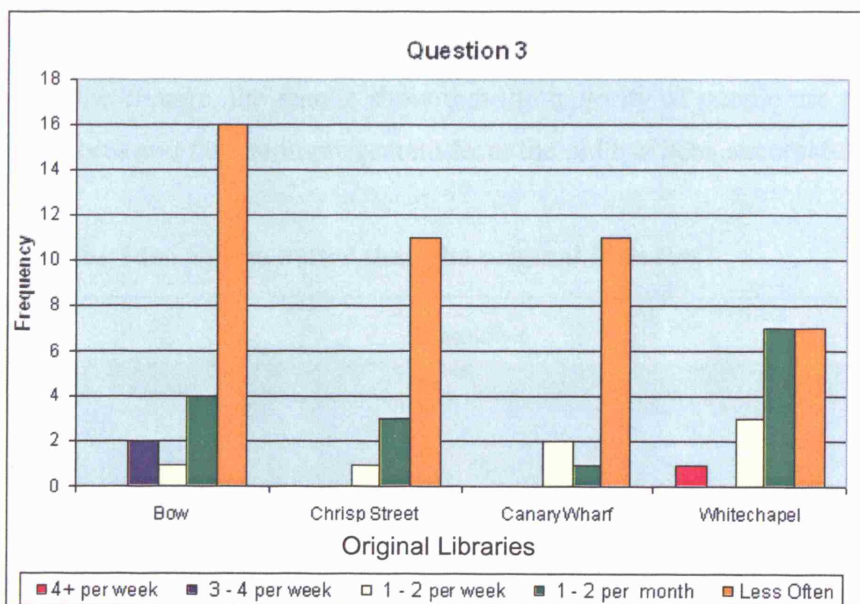


Figure 6: How often the original libraries were used



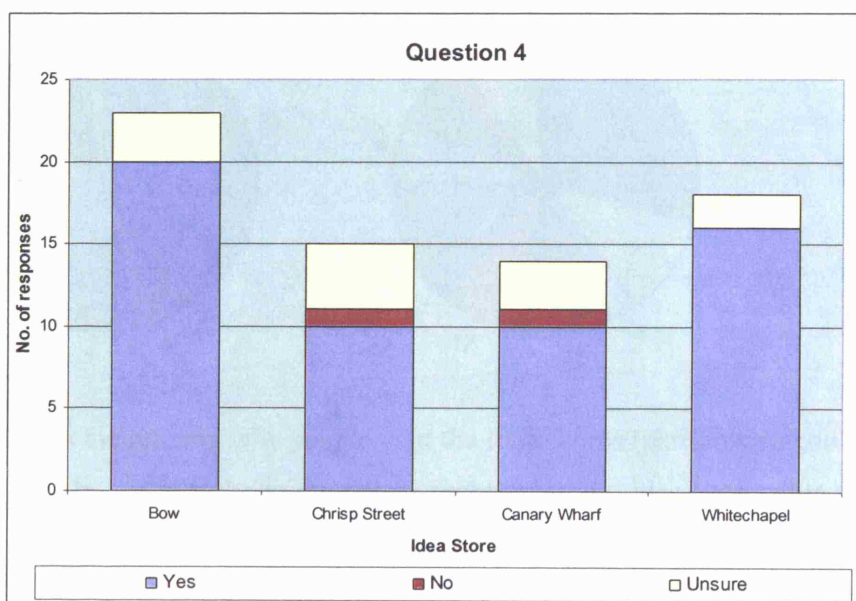
A comparison between the original libraries and Idea Stores show that there is higher percentage of people using the new facilities more often than the old libraries (as shown by figure 7). The only declines were within users visiting 4 + per week and Less Often. This supports evidence that the Idea Stores are succeeding in encouraging visitor numbers on a more regular basis.

Figure 7: Percentage comparison between visits to the original libraries and the new Idea Stores

4 + per week	3 – 4 per week	1 – 2 per week	1 – 2 per month	Less Often
- 0.18%	+ 2.77%	+ 4.38%	+ 12.95%	- 19.91%

Figure 8 shows that the majority of the participants of the survey who had been visitors to the original libraries felt that the Idea Stores were better than what facilities existed before. The two who said no were in the older age brackets and commented that they preferred the traditional, formal designs of the older libraries. Although everyone will not be happy with the change, the results show that the majority of people are pleased with the new Idea Stores and that an improvement from the old has been successful.

Figure 8: Are the Idea Stores better than the original libraries?



4.4 Success of Other Facilities

The Idea Stores have become centres for the community and are working in partnership with local organisations to improve local educational and support services. With the introduction of cafes, internet terminals, classes etc libraries have more to offer than just books and it is important to know if these new services have contributed to the rise in visitor numbers.

Figure 9: Facilities and services used

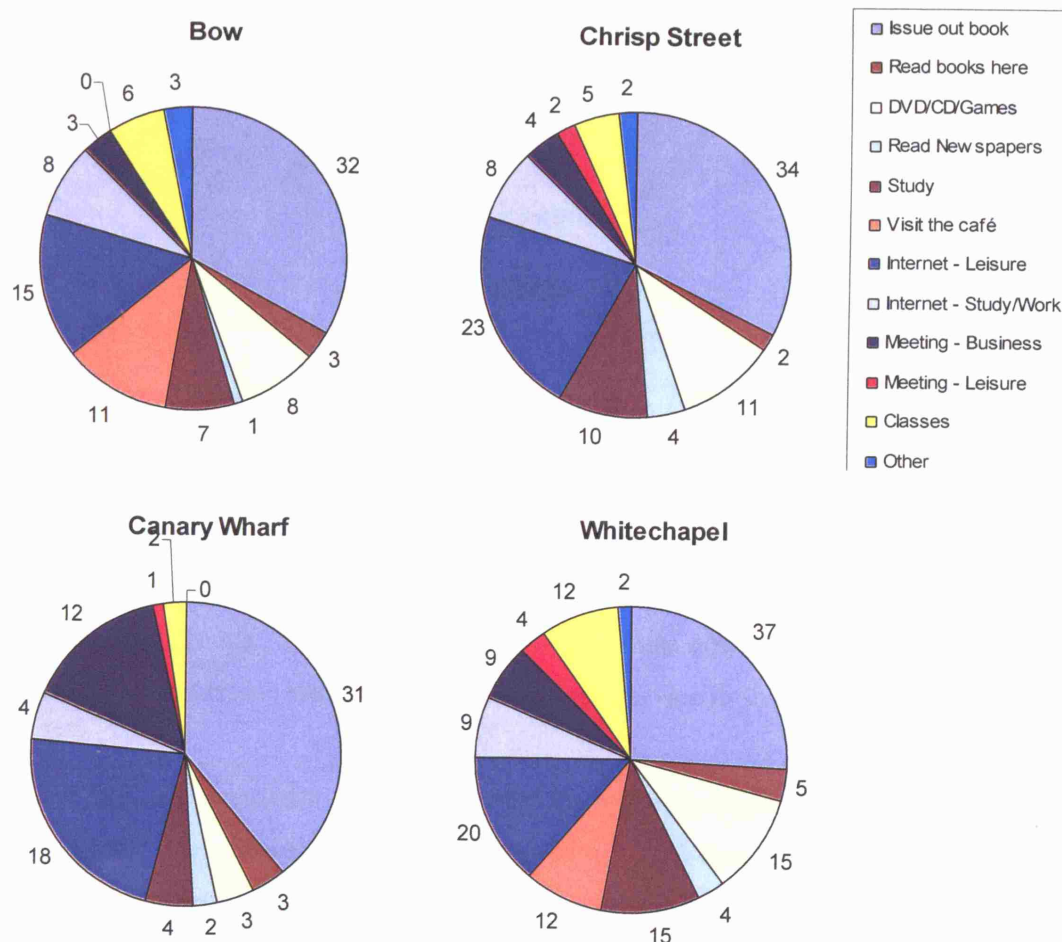
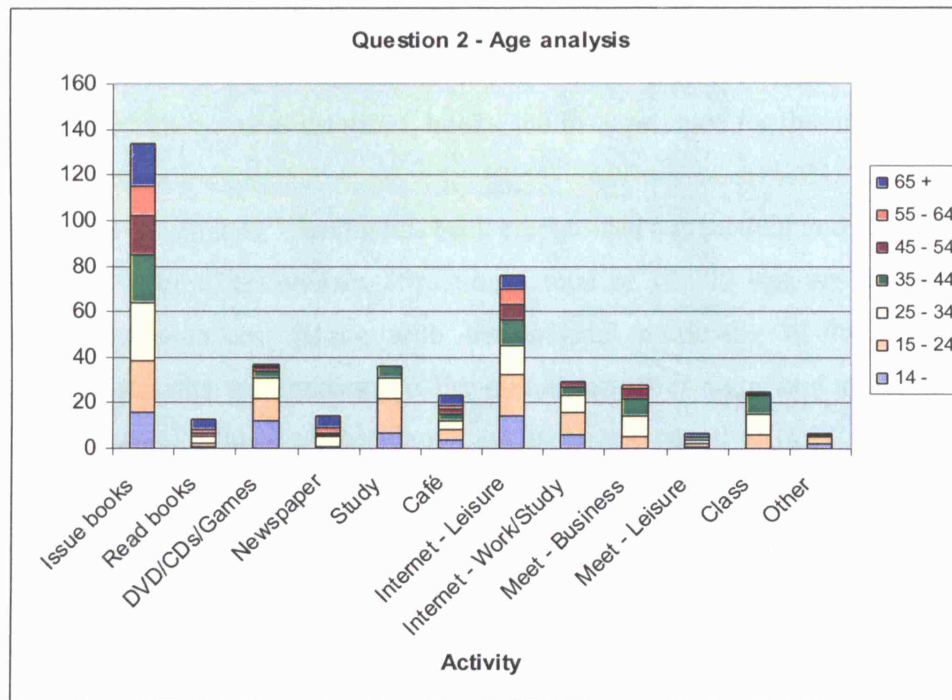


Figure 9 shows the reasons why people visit the Idea Stores (participants could pick more than one). Books are still the main reason people visit the Idea Stores due to the “good quality and range” provided as one participant commented.

Figure 10: Facilities and services used by different age groups



There was no clear age range which stood out as using books more than others showing that books are still important for people of all ages (shown in figure 10). The new internet terminals have proved to be successful for both leisure and study/work again with people of all ages using these facilities but younger people under the age of 24 use them more than other age groups. Young people tend to be more computer orientated than older generations. This service was the second most used service in the Idea Stores.

The four facilities seemed to be very popular for business meetings, the highest being in Canary Wharf Idea Store which is not surprising given the proximity to the business centres. The majority of people using the facilities for this purpose were between 25 and 44 with many only using the Idea Stores for this reason or using the café also, indicating that the Idea Stores have become meetings locations. Only the Bow and Whitechapel Idea Stores provided a café which were both quite highly used in comparison to the other services on offer in these two facilities. This demonstrates that cafés are useful facilities to have on site and can provide an extra source of income, however it is difficult to assess

if they have contributed to visitor numbers. Although Whitechapel Idea Store is the most visited, the Bow Idea Store is the second to last most used. Everyone who used the cafés also used other services showing that nobody visits the Idea Stores just for this facility whereas they did for business meetings, books and in some cases for the internet.

The importance of life long learning has been emphasised a great deal and the Idea Stores are venues for over 1,000 courses attracting a total of 11,000 learners and a total of 15,000 yearly attendees. Along with the original marketing of the Idea Stores newspapers containing information on the classes on offer were sent around to local households. Currently there are brochures available at Council Offices and at the Idea Stores themselves giving information on available classes, (*Principle Idea Store Manager, 2008*). The survey shows that most attendees of the classes were from between 15 and 44 which is representative of the overall population of Tower Hamlets especially amongst the young immigrants who are moving to the area.

Those class attendees who commented in the survey stated how useful it is to have a place to be taught, study and read all under one roof and to have teachers who are employed to work at the Idea Stores – not supply or freelance who may come and go irregularly making it more difficult to learn. This was a similar response to young people who attended homework clubs and other activities that the Idea Stores provides.

The renting of DVDs/CDs/Games has been more successful with people in the age brackets of 14– and 15-24 which is not surprising as people from this group are more likely to use these facilities whilst it was more of the older age groups who came in to read newspapers.

4.5 Change in Design, Location and Rebranding

The literature review emphasis' the importance of giving libraries a new image and making facilities accessible and convenient for all. By moving location the facilities are changing from making visitors go to them to actually relocating to where the visitors are. Concern arises over changing the name from “libraries” to “Idea Store” and whether or

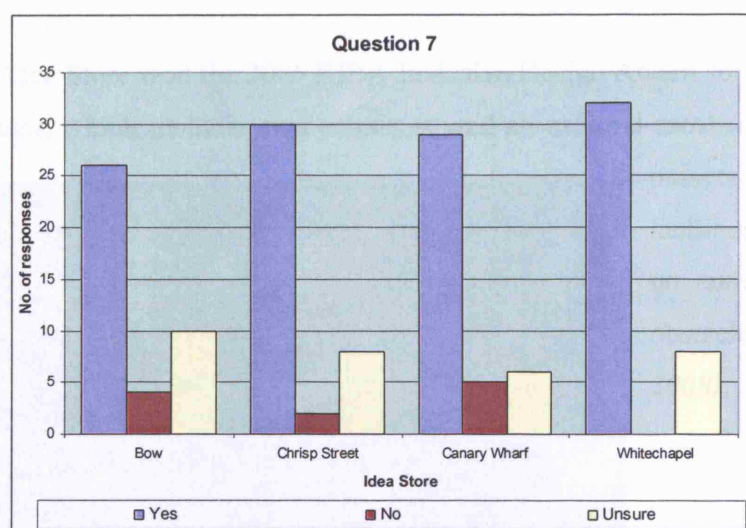
not this would help boost numbers or merely create confusion over what these facilities are for.

4.5.1 Design: Exterior

Libraries across the country are seeing a physical transformation in their appearance such as the iconic structure that is Peckham Library. All four Idea Stores have followed suit and have been built in modern designs.

The survey revealed that few people were intimidated from visiting the Idea Stores because of external image. The majority answered they were welcoming buildings due to their modern designs and in the cases of Chrisp Street and Whitechapel many complimented the colourful design saying that the structures are eye-catching. It was these two Idea Stores that were rated the most welcoming as shown by figure 11.

Figure 11: Is the external design welcoming?



This is because they are both structures very different to the older buildings around them making them eye-catching. The colourful exterior and modern image is far from the older formal stereotype that libraries have been linked to. Interviewees commented on this difference and mentioned that the unique design influences the public's curiosity, (*Chrisp Street Idea Store Manager, 2008*). This then encourages people to find out what is inside and leads to the use of services.

Figure 12: Favour of external design compared to age

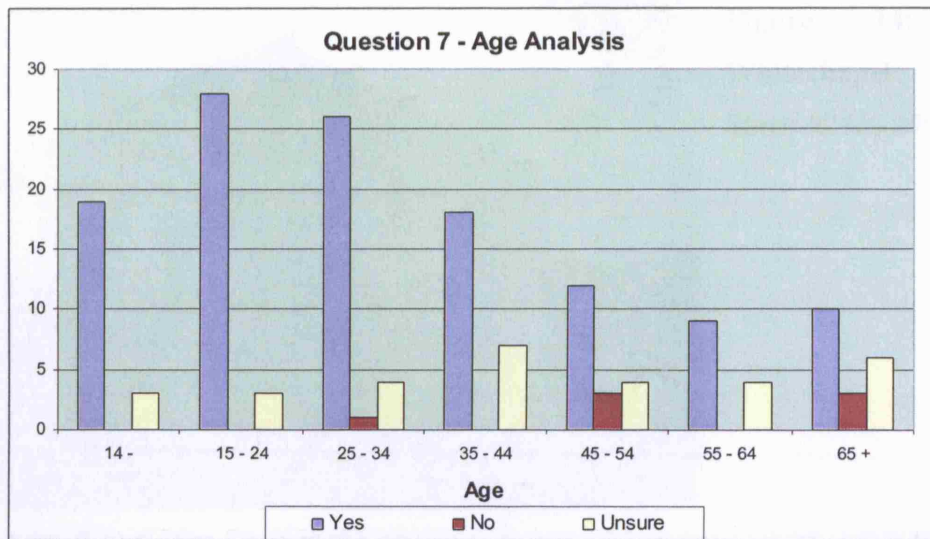


Figure 12 shows younger people prefer the new modern designs more than older generations who prefer traditional buildings. However, more of the older generations still found the external designs welcoming than those who did not.

Whitechapel Idea Store won the 2006 RIBA Inclusive Design Award for its “openness of the ground floor, which includes two entrances, and an external escalator which sweeps



passers-by up to the facilities above...[with] no entrance barriers or obstacles”, (CAE, 2008).

Figure 13: The Chrisp Street Idea Store



Figure 14: The Whitechapel Idea Store (CAE, 2008)

The Canary Wharf Idea Store is the smallest at only 940 square meters and is built in a modern shopping centre, not really standing out from the surrounding facilities and shops (shown in figure 15). However the majority of the public still viewed it as welcoming with many commenting on how it was good to be able to see what was on offer from the outside due to the large glass entrance. A comment was made that with the ability to see people inside working at the computers coupled with the open space outside the entrance gave the impression that this was a relaxing facility.

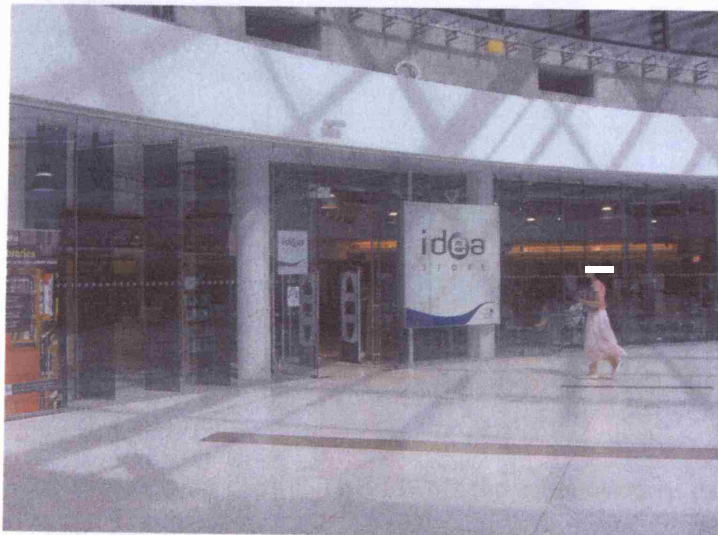


Figure 15: The Canary Wharf Idea Store



The physical appearance of the Bow Idea Store is slightly different from the other three because it is mainly brick with fewer large glass windows. A section of the facility is also built onto the original Victorian library which gives a partly modern and partly older structure (shown in figure 18).

Figure 16: The entrance to the Bow Idea Store



Figure 17: The back of the Idea Store visible from the car park and housing estate behind

This explains why Bow scored lowest for being welcoming. It is also situated off the main road and to access it from the housing estates behind it means walking across a large car park (shown in figure 17) and down an alley in between the Idea Store and a derelict shopping centre. This lowers the attractiveness of the area and may have an effect on how welcoming the Idea Store appears.



Figure 18: The original Victorian library which the new Idea Store is extended onto and the derelict Safeway in the background

The fact that the Bow Idea Store is not as innovative or as eye catching as the other Idea Stores explains why fewer people found it welcoming and why there are fewer visitors and book issues are made here than the other Idea Stores. There is an importance for new library facilities to be welcoming and the results give proof that the more innovative, bold and iconic a structure the more people will want to visit.

4.5.2 Design: Interior

Merging libraries with many community services and adding new facilities such as cafes has meant internal layouts have adapted. Policies aimed at ridding old fashioned and difficult to access facilities such as high bookshelves have given the opportunity for exciting furniture and initiatives for making libraries relaxed and inviting places. Access for all has been a key influence in design with provision for the elderly and disabled being created. The Idea Stores all had similar internal designs as shown in figure

Chrisp Street and Whitechapel were rated the highest with nobody disliking the internal space. All four Idea Stores were decorated with bright colours creating a vibrant and exciting atmosphere and were fitted throughout with innovative bookshelves ridding those old and formal furnishings from older libraries. Comments were that this made searching for books more interesting and relaxing and the low bookshelves made it easy to see to other areas of the Idea Stores. Modern chairs and sofas give the opportunity for people to read and relax.

Most comments about these two Idea Stores were about the large amounts of natural light which fills the inside making it “a much more pleasant experience” and “nice to see outside without being distracted by noise”. Figures 19 and 20 show the colourful and innovative designs that have made the Idea Stores relaxed and welcoming.

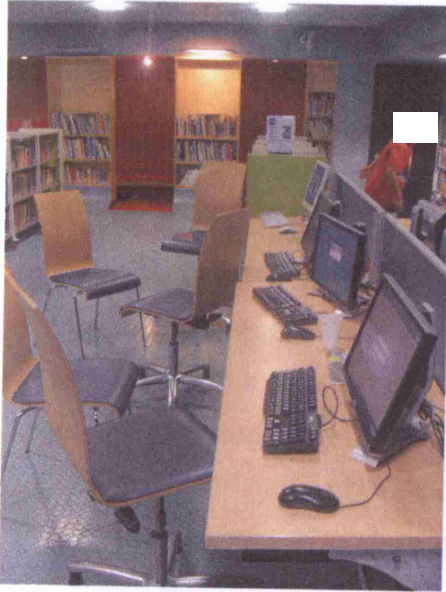


Figure 19 (Left): The computer facilities at Bow Idea Store

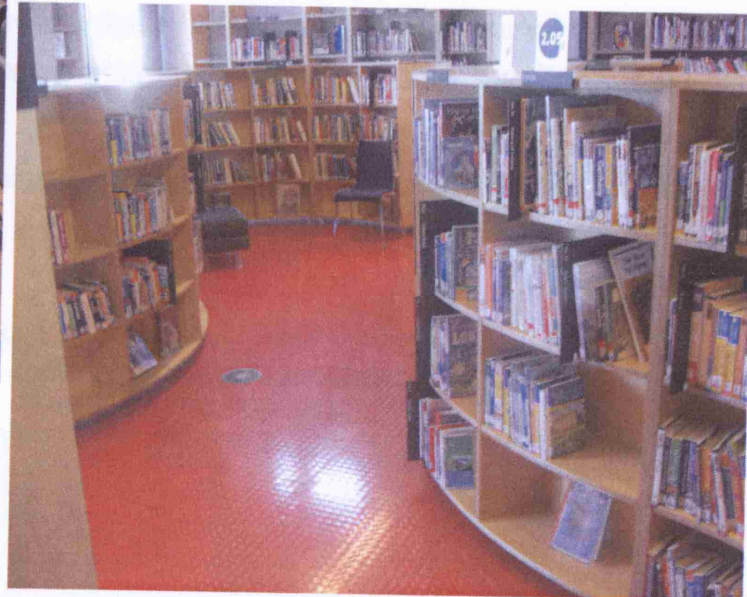


Figure 20 (Right): The innovative book shelves at Whitechapel Idea Store

Figure 21: Favour of modern internal design

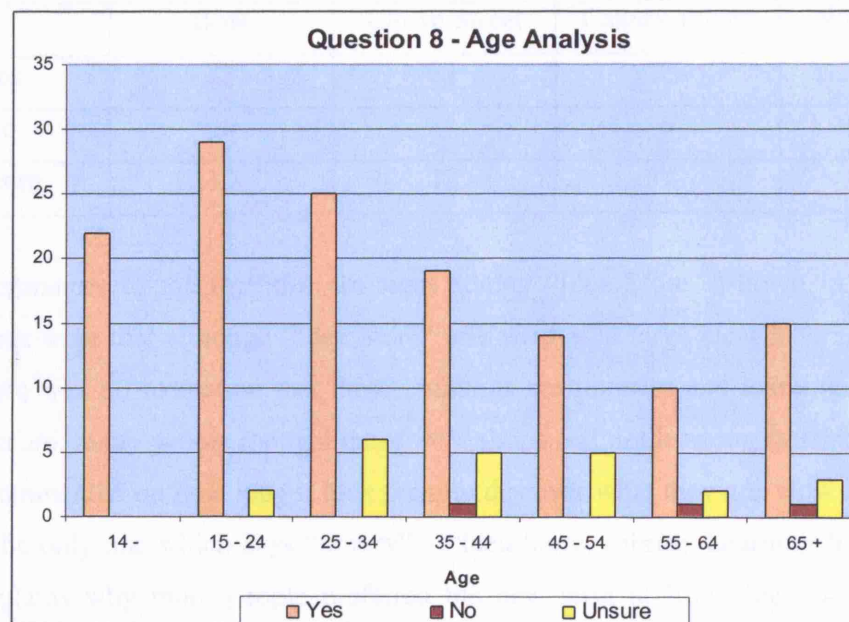
	Bow	Chrisp Street	Canary Wharf	Whitechapel
Yes	33	35	32	34
No	1	0	1	1
Unsure	6	5	7	5

Figure 21 shows that most people liked the modern internal designs of the Idea Stores. There was not much difference in the results between the Idea Stores which is not surprising as all are very similar in designs on the inside. Comments were made however that the Idea Store at Canary Wharf was “not as spacious and almost claustrophobic”

compared to the other Idea Stores. However, this may be down to the fact that it is built in a shopping centre, restricting its size with a large glass window only at the front of the facility not allowing the illusion of more space as was found in Chrisp Street. Overall it is evident that the Audit Commission, 2001 was correct in stating that changing small things about a library will bring great benefits.

It was thought that there would be a difference between the age groups with younger people liking the modern interior whilst the older visitors preferred the more traditional. Although those few who did say they were unhappy or unsure about the internal design were of older age groups (as shown by figure 22) it is clearly evident that the majority of the public felt that the internal design of the Idea Stores was the biggest achievement in their development. Like the external designs the older generations may feel more comfortable with the older traditional styles whilst the younger prefer modern and more relaxed environments.

Figure 22: Favour of modern internal design compared to age group



But despite the old rules on silence being discarded in favour of relaxed rules for people to talk and children to play in crèches and children areas, many of the older interviewees commented that sometimes noise levels can get a bit too much.

Several comments were made that accessibility in the Idea Stores was clearly considered with disabled access throughout the buildings and escalators and elevators available. Points were made that there had been vast improvements from the older library buildings. Some people who attended classes stated that the classrooms were “cleverly designed and good places to learn and study”. Many had sliding doors which allowed for classrooms to be separated or enlarged depending on the needs of a group.

4.5.3 Design: Rebranding

As discussed in the literature review changing the title of an institution such as a library can be risky and give rise to debates between traditionalists and modernists. This has been the case in Tower Hamlets. Although most people were in favour of the term “Idea Store” there were many who were unsure or did not like the change of term from “public library” as shown by figure 23.

Figure 23: Do you prefer the term “Idea Store, Library Learning Information” to “Library”?

	Bow	Chrisp Street	Canary Wharf	Whitechapel
Yes	27	21	25	25
No	3	7	6	9
Unsure	10	12	9	6

At the entrances to the facilities are signs stating “Idea Store” (shown in figure 24). Comments were that although “Idea Store” was written in large clear letters, apart from Bow there was no indication that these buildings are libraries and learning centres. As stated before, many people thought these were shops and not learning facilities at all and others commented on how long it took them to discover what they are. Bow Idea Store’s sign is the only one which says “library” – “Idea Store, Library Learning Information”. This explains why more people preferred the new term at Bow than the other three facilities which have signs just saying “Idea Store”. Although this was only a small margin Bow also had the least number of people saying they were unhappy with the title.

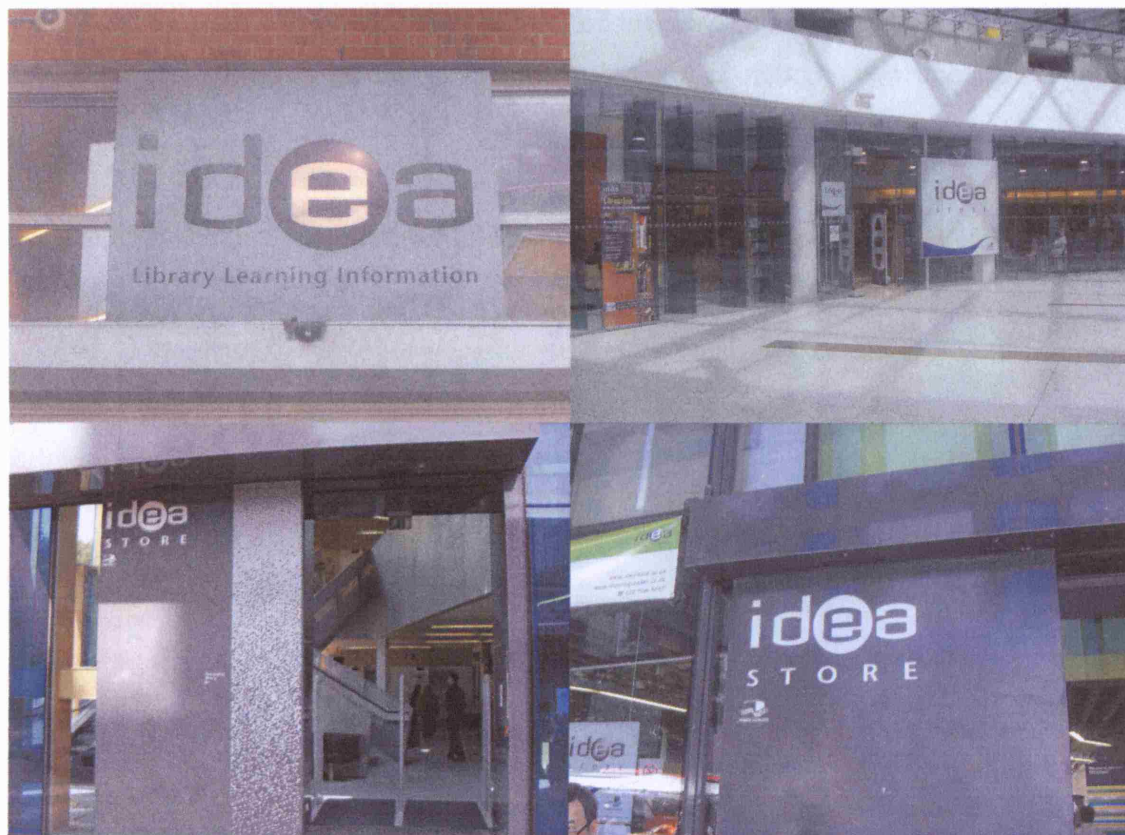


Figure 24: The four signs at the entrances to the Idea Stores. Top left: Bow. Top right: Canary Wharf. Bottom left: Chrisp Street. Bottom right: Whitechapel.

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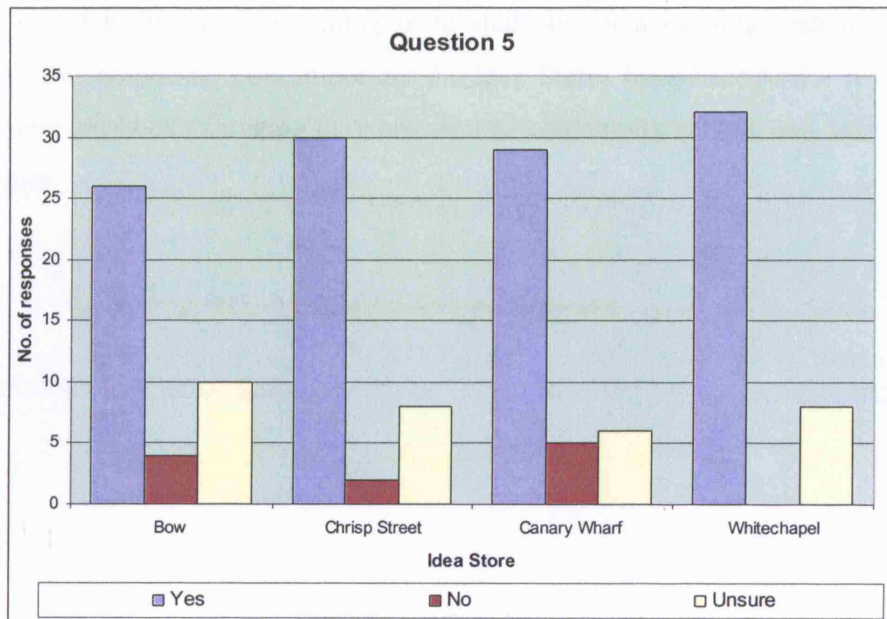
As stated before, relying on word of mouth to get the Idea Store concept known throughout Tower Hamlets seems inadequate. Coupled with this and the entrance signs it signifies more needs to be done to promote what the Idea Stores are. One comment made in the survey was, “it is clear why it is important to redesign the buildings to give them a new image but why change the name? A library is a library. Why confuse the public who are familiar with this term with one that gives no clue about this building’s purpose”. This comment sums up whether or not there is a need to change the term library at all.

4.5.4 Location

Following the community consultation and government policies on relocating libraries to areas used more by the public the Idea Stores have been situated in busy shopping areas to increase visitor numbers. From the results of the questionnaire the majority of the

people asked were happy with the location of the Idea Stores as shown by figure 25 . Whitechapel seemed to be the most ideally located as nobody was unhappy with its location.

Figure 25 : Are the Idea Stores well located?



Overall it is clear that more people visit the Idea Stores in conjunction with visiting somewhere else which supports what was found in previous research that most people do not want to make special visits to libraries. The Idea Store where most people visited without going anywhere else was Bow. As stated before, Bow has been a good example the importance of locating near shopping facilities so with Safeway next door shutting visitors have only the Idea Store to visit in that area. Although there are many other shops in the vicinity they are all small local businesses which do not have the same pull as a large supermarket.

Comments were made about how Bow is not built on a main road but set back off a minor road obstructed by objects and buildings making it difficult to see. Chrisp Street and Whitechapel are both located in prominent places where they are clearly visible at the heart of shopping facilities explaining why they are more favoured. Canary Wharf is

situated in the middle of a large shopping centre. The survey showed that the latter three had the lowest number of people visiting only the Idea Stores on a single journey.

When asked where else people were visiting it was mainly to the local supermarkets which proves that this government objective is important. Those people who were only visiting the Idea Stores were coming in to study or for a meeting with friends or for business. This emphasis' how important the Idea Stores have become for reasons other than issuing out books showing they are seen as community centres and very important focal points.

Chapter 5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of the survey show that the overall public perception of the Idea Stores is that they have been beneficial to the community and been a good replacement for the original library facilities. The argument that libraries must rebrand themselves through providing new services and new designs has clearly been upheld through the evidence gathered for this research project.

Information obtained from the interviews show that since the Idea Stores have been built there have been increases in the percentage of Tower Hamlets residents using public library facilities. Whether this is for the traditional borrowing of books is unclear, however the statistics provided show increases for the two newest Idea Stores and decreases for the older two. With this split it is difficult to assess overall whether the Idea Stores have been successful in reversing the decline in book issues.

It must be remembered that libraries are no longer libraries in the traditional sense and the results from the surveys show that the new facilities provided by the Idea Stores have been very beneficial in attracting back visitors. Initiatives on introducing computer and internet facilities have not been wasted and evidence shows that usage of these modern services has helped provide a new image and the take up of the many learning classes on offer has been high adding more evidence for the success of the Idea Stores' services. Cafes, innovative furniture and open spaces have contributed to a more restful atmosphere. Gone are the days of silence and formal layouts in favour of more relaxed and vibrant environments where all can feel welcome and learn at ease.

It is clearly evident from both secondary reading and the survey results that the redesigning of libraries externally and internally is one of the most important changes that must be made to bring these fundamental institutions into the twenty first century and the Idea Stores have done a very good job. But evidence points that those more prominent buildings such as Chrisp Street and Whitechapel Idea Stores are more likely to be successful rather than others like Bow which was extended from the older Victorian

library and is situated out of sight of any main roads. Average trends show that all but Bow Idea Store are seeing increasing visitor numbers year after year but even Bow saw an increase between 2007-08 albeit a small one.

However, the statistics also demonstrate the importance of location and the policies on building new library facilities in popular shopping areas has been proved with the sharp decline in users at Bow Idea Store following the closure of the local supermarket. Everything should be done to reopen this store to boost visitor numbers. But Bow has shown more success than the other three Idea Stores over the way it is presented, with its entrance sign stating that it is a library rather than just an Idea Store – a term which has brought much confusion amongst members of the public.

Rebranding is very important for libraries to attract back visitors but it seems that changing the term library is perhaps going too far. By keeping the term “library” in the title people will know what services are provided and this will also satisfy traditionalists. With the vast number of foreign immigrants in Tower Hamlets it is important to keep basic terms like library rather than changing them to something that gives no indication as to what that facility provides. Coupled with this in the run up to the three future Idea Stores advertising needs to be carried out as was done with Bow and Chrisp Street so people know what is on offer and know where these facilities are.

Overall those developing the three future Idea Stores have good experience and knowledge and should feel confident with what has been achieved with the four existing Idea Stores. Changes in advertising techniques and developing the term “Idea Store” to be more recognisable as a library, community centre and educational facility will ensure the Idea Stores’ continued success in helping local communities and hopefully will be a model for future library developments throughout the country.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Oppenheim's Rules for Questionnaire Design

- Length – Questions should not be too long.
- Avoid double-barrelled questions – This leaves the participants wondering whether to answer “yes” to one part of the question and “no” to the other.
- Avoid proverbs – Such sayings tend to provoke unthinking agreement.
- Avoid double-negatives.
- Don't know and not applicable – This should be allowed for it must be remembered that the participant may not have an opinion on the question.
- Use simple word, avoid acronyms, abbreviations, jargon and technical terms – Participants may feel intimidated and guess the answers
- Beware the dangers of alternative usage.
- Avoid words that are notorious for their ambiguity.
- All closed questions should start their lives as open ones.
- Beware leading questions.

(Oppenheim, 1992: 128).

Appendix 2

Survey

I am a UCL student currently writing my dissertation on the effectiveness of the Idea Stores in Tower Hamlets and I was wondering if you would be kind enough to spend just two minutes of your time to participate with my research?

Male ☐

Female ☐

Age

14 - ☐ 15 – 24 ☐ 25 – 34 ☐ 35 – 44 ☐ 45 – 54 ☐

55 – 64 ☐ 65 + ☐

1) How often do you visit this Idea Store?

4 + times a week ☐ 1 – 2 times a month ☐

3 – 4 times a week ☐ Less often ☐

1 – 2 times a week ☐

2) What facilities and services do you use the most on your visits to this Idea Store?

Issue out books ☐ Use the internet for leisure ☐

Read books here ☐ Use the internet for study ☐

Issue out DVDs/CDs/Games ☐ Meet someone for business ☐

Read newspapers/magazines ☐ Meet someone for leisure ☐

Study ☐ Attend a class ☐

Visit the Café ☐ Other (please specify) ☐

3) Did you use the local library facilities in Tower Hamlets before the Idea Stores were built? If no please go to question 5. If yes, how often did you use those facilities?

4 + times a week ☐ 1 – 2 times a month ☐

3 – 4 times a week ☐ Less often ☐

1 – 2 times a week ☐

4) Do you think that the Idea Stores are better than the old library facilities? Please give details why?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Unsure ☐

Why?.....
.....
.....

5) Do you think that the location of this Idea Store is practical and easy to get to?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Unsure ☐

6) Is the point of your journey today only to visit this Idea Store or are you visiting here on your way to carry out other tasks such as shopping? If “on way to carry out other tasks” please give details on where else you are visiting.

Just visiting Idea Store ☐

On way to carry out other tasks ☐

.....
.....

7) Do you think the external design of the building is welcoming and encourages people to visit? Please give details why?

Yes ☐

No ☐

Unsure ☐

Why?.....

.....
.....

8) Do you think that the internal design of the Idea Store has been planned out well?

Please give details why.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Unsure ☐

Why?.....

.....
.....

9) Do you think that the name “Idea Store, Library Learning Information” is better at promoting the Idea Stores and attracting more people than just using the term “Library”?

Please give details.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Unsure ☐

.....
.....
.....

10) Do you think that the Idea Stores through out Tower Hamlets could do more to attract more visitors? Please give details.

Yes ☐

No ☐

Unsure ☐

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your time.